

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

SS-15 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-13 DRC-01 /152 W

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R 171155Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4265

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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DEPT ALSO PASS CAIRO

EO 11652: N/A DECON 9/17/74

TAGS: PINS JO SY EG

SUBJ: FATAH-SYRIAN RELATIONS

REF: BEIRUT: 10785 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: EVENTS OVER PAST WEEKEND SAW ADDITIONAL STRAINS IN
FATAH-SYRIAN RELATIONS, WITH SARG APPARENTLY PREPARED BOOK NO
FEDAYEEN CRITICISM OF SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN POLICY RE JORDAN. THERE
ARE ALSO SIGNS OF MORE OPEN SYRIAN ENCOURAGEMENT OF SA'IQA
TO ASSERT GREATER INFLUENCE WITHIN FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT AT EXPENSE
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OF FATAH/PLO "ESTABLISHMENT". END SUMMARY.

1. WEEKEND REPORT SFROM DAMASCUS INDICATE THAT SYRIAN AUTHORITIES HAVE SHUT DOWN FATAH'S VOICE OF PALESTINE RADIO STATION AT DERA'A (NEAR JORDANIAN BORDER) AND BANNED CIRCULATION OF PLO WEEKLY PALESTINE REVOLUTION AS RESULT OF THEIR STRIDENT CONDEMNATIONS OF SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN RAPPROACHMENT WITH JORDAN (E.G., BEIRUT 10731). WE GATHER THAT FATAH LEADERS ARE FEARFUL OF SIMILAR ACTION BY SADAT REGIME AGAINST VOP STATION IN CAIRO AND ARE CURRENTLY LOBBYING FRANTICALLY HERE AND IN EGYPT TO PREVENT IT. SALAH KHALAF (ABU IYAD) AND FAROUQ QADDUMI (ABU LUTF) REPORTEDLY ARE PLEADING FATAH'S CASE WITH GOE INFORMATION OFFICIALS IN CAIRO, AND EFFORTS ARE UNDERWAY IN BEIRUT TO MOBILIZE SO-CALLED "ARAB FRONT FOR PARTICIPATION IN PALESTINE REVOLUTION" (COMPOSED OF LEBANESE AND OTHER ARAB POLITICAL GROUPS SYMPATHETIC TO FATAH/PLO) IN SUPPORT OF HARD-LINE FEDAYEEN POSITION RE ARAB RECONCILIATION WITH KING HUSSEIN.

2. AT SAME TIME, 'ARAFAT APPEARS ANXIOUS TO PLAY DOWN RUMORS OF FATAH RIFT WITH SARG AND SA'IQA. IN INTERVIEW IN BEIRUT'S PRO-FEDAYEEN AL MUHARRIR (SEP 17), HE REFERRED TO LATEST FATAH-SYRIE DIFFERENCES AS "TRANSIENT PROBLEM" THAT COULD NOT AFFECT THEIR CLOSE "REVOLUTIONARY" RELATIONS. ADDED: "OUR CONFIDENCE IN SYRIA AND PRES ASSAD CANNOT BE SHAKEN... WE AND THEY, WHETHER EITHER SIDE LIKES IT OR NOT, ARE IN SAME TRENCH STRUGGLING AGAINST SOH IMPERIALISM AND ISRAEL." IN SEPARATE INTERVIEW WITH INDEPENDENT AN NAHAR (SEP 17), 'ARAFAT REFUSED TO COMMENT SPECIFICALLY ON FATAH-SYRIAN RELATIONS. INSTEAD, HE REAFFIRMED PLO'S DETERMINED OPPOSITION TO RECONCILIATION WITH JORDAN ("WE WERE AWARE THAT CERTAIN CONTACTS WERE TAKING PLACE FOR RAPPROACHMENT WITH JORDAN, BUT WE PREFERRED TO STAY OUT OF THEM"); CASTIGATED KING HUSSEIN AS ENEMY OF ARAB CAUSE; AND EXPRESSED DISMAY RE CURRENT ARAB SITUATION, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS "A BIG SWAMP". "WHAT HURTS US," SAID 'ARAFAT, "IS THAT EVERY TIME PALESTINE REVOLUTION ACHIEVES VICTORIES ABROAD (I.E., AT ALGIERS NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE), RESTRICTIONS ARE TIGHTENED IN THE ARAB WORLD... OUR MOVEMENT THUS FACES CERTAIN EMBARRASSMENTS FROM RESTRICTIONS HERE AND THERE, BUT OUR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POSITION IS STRONG AND WE FACE THEM WITH PATIENCE AND UNITY". ASKED IF HE CARED TO NAME ANY ARAB STATE RESPONSIBLE FOR SUCH RESTRICTIONS, 'ARAFAT MERELY SMILED.

3. MEANWHILE, PLO PROPAGANDISTS IN LEBANON--DESPITE CLEAR SIGNS OF NON-COOPERATION FROM SA'IQA--HAVE BEGUN CONCERTED CAMPAIGN AGAINST ARAB RAPPROACHMENT WITH JORDAN. LEAFLETS, POSTERS AND HANDBILLS ARE APPEARING ON BEIRUT

STREETS, AND SERIES OF "POPULAR PROTEST RALLIES" WAS LAUNCHED HERE SEP 16 IN COOPERATION WITH LOCAL LEFTIST, "PEOGRESSIVE FORCES". SPEAKERS FROM FATAH, PFLP AND OTHER GROUPS INVEIGHED AGAINST RECONCILIATION WITH KING HUSSEIN, SLOGANS CRITICAL OF SADAT AND ASSAD WERE CHANTED, AND PLACARDS BEARING SUCH EXHORTATIONS AS "THEY HAVE CLOSED THE RADIO STATION, BUT CAN THEY MUZZLE OUR MASSES?" WERE MUCH IN EVIDENCE.

4. IN ADDITION, PUBLIC COMMUNIQUE ISSUED HERE BY "ARAB FRONT" AND VARIOUS FEDAYEEN ORGAIZATIONS INSIST ON FOLLOWING DIE-HARD (AND IMPOSSIBLE) TERMS FOR RESTORATION OF EASTERN ARAB COMMAND AND ENDING JORDAN'S ISOLATION:

(A) RETRACTION BY GOJ OF WEST BANK FEDERATION PLAN;

(B) ADHERENCE TO CAIRO AND AMMAN ACCORDS;

(C) RETURN OF FEDAYEEN TO EAST JORDAN AS "SOLE LEGAL REP OF PALESTINE PEOPLE" AND WITH COMPLETE FREEDOM OF ACTIVITY; AND

(D) STATIONING OF SYRIAN AND IRAQI UNITS IN JORDANIAN SOIL.

AMID ALL THIS COMMOTION, LEBANESE SOCIALIST LEADER (AND "ARAB FRONT" SECRETARY) KAMAL JUMBLATT WILL REPORTEDLY VISIT DAMASCUS SOON, PROBABLY TO REDEMONSTRATE WITH SARG LEADERS OVER THEIR TREATMENT OF FEDAYEEN AND TO TRY OBTAIN BETTER SYRIAN-BAATHIST AND SA'IQA COOPERATION WITH STANCE ADOPTED BY OTHER FEDAYEEN AND THEIR SUPPORTERS IN "ARAB FRONT".

5. COMMENT: DESPITE WHAT WE SEE AS SYRIAN WARNING TO FEDAYEEN NOT TO GO TOO FAR IN THEIR OPPOSITION TO SYRIAN AND EGYPTIAN POLICY VIS-A-VIS JORDAN, THAT OPPOSITION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HERE SEEMS LIKELY TO BECOME EVEN MORE OPENLY ANTAGONISTIC TO SARG AND GOE POLICY AS ABOVE-MENTIONED FEDAYEEN PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN GATHERS MOMENTUM HERE IN DAYS AHEAD. SYRIAN EFFORTS TO COMBAT IT AND, AT SAME TIME, TO CUT MORE GROUND FROM UNDER FATAH-PLO LEADERSHIP ARE DOUBTLESS ALREADY IN PROGRESS (FBIS M142024), AND EVENTS IN COMING DAYS SHOULD PROVIDE SOME INTERESTING INSIGHTS INTO WHAT 'ARAFAT CLAIMS IS INTRUINSIC FATAH-SYRIAN UNITY. WOULD BE IRONIC, FOR EXAMPLE, IF SARG SHOULD BEGIN COMPLAINING TO GOL ABOUT "ANTI-SYRIAN BEHAVIOR" OF FEDAYEEN IN LEBANON. AT SAME TIME, GOL IS CONCERNED THAT MORE FEDAYEEN WILL COME HERE BECAUSE OF CURRENT FEDAYEEN DISPUTE WITH SYRIANS AND/OR THAT THERE WILL BE CLASH BETWEEN FATAH AND SA'IQA FORCES HERE. BUFFUM

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED CAIRO.

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